Dialogue with Islam. Facing the Challenge of Muslim Integration in France, Netherlands, Germany.

Vroom, H.M.

2011

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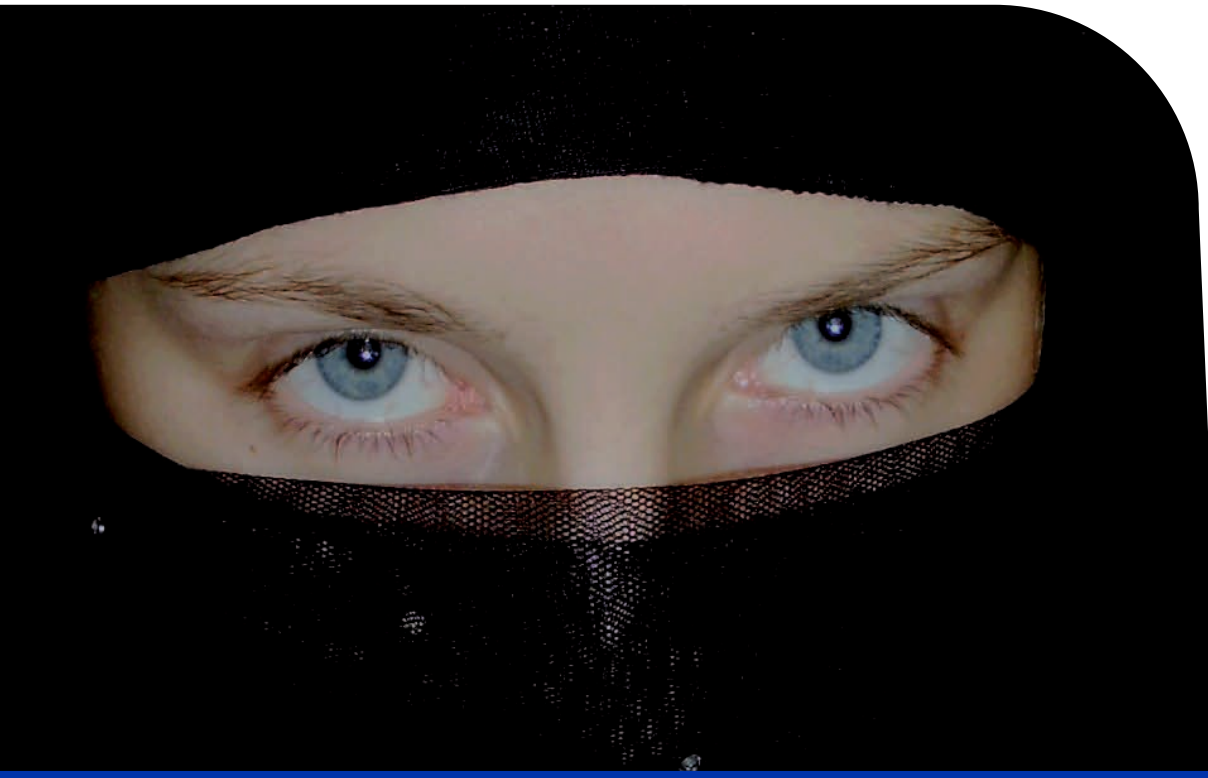

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Centre for European Studies
Design: RARO S.L.
Printed in Brussels by Drukkerij Jo Vandenbulcke
Brussels
Centre for European Studies
Rue du Commerce 20
Brussels, BE – 1000

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For more information please visit:

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This publication receives funding from the European Parliament.

Photos used in this publication: Centre for European Studies 2010

Introduction and Summary[1]

The aim of this paper is to contribute to a balanced and consistent EU policy on Muslim immigrants. In this paper, I will use the term 'Islam policy' for all governmental decisions in relation to Muslims (as Muslims) and the religion of Islam. The paper emphasises that mosques are at the heart of the broad networks of Islamic organisations and that most of European Islam's religious and moral leaders are, at least so far, only marginally acquainted with Western culture. It pleads for creative and open approaches to the needs of both Muslims and society as a whole; for state cooperation with Islamic organisations; and for establishing schools of Islamic theology at European universities, staffed by Islamic theologians who can develop their thinking in a European context and communicate that to other imams. The paper also emphasises the need for realistic information about Islam and Muslims living in European societies.

Part 1 describes the main challenges facing Western Europe:

- Islam does not fit into existing state–church arrangements.
- Its religious obligations require more latitude than

[1] I would like to express my gratitude to the individuals who spoke with me about the arrangements in France, the Netherlands and Germany. The details they imparted gave me insight into the complexity of the problems and the ambiguities faced by various levels of government in dealing with the issue. After a great deal of reflection, I decided against mentioning their names to prevent their being held responsible for any mistakes I may have made. That does not detract at all, however, from my gratitude.

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existing rules provide.

• There is a lack of integration among a relatively high percentage of Muslims.

• Both the concepts of Islam held by some citizens and Islamophobia pose problems.

Part 2 describes the policies of France, the Netherlands and Germany towards Islam against the background of their distinct laws and cultures. The third part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the following four central issues:

1. separation of church and state;
2. international relations and representativity of leadership;
3. integration, social cohesion, *Leitkultur* and national identity;
4. Islam and Western values.

Finally, Part 4 summarises the main challenges Islam poses and offers advice for setting policy in regard to Islam.

Keywords Islam – separation of church and state – integration – social cohesion – representation – religious education – values – information

1 The Challenges

The Mismatch Between the Mosque and the Law

A comparison of Islam policies in France, Germany and the Netherlands is especially interesting because these three countries deal differently with the separation of church and state. A common challenge is that administrative structures of mosques do not fit into Western legal systems; this is no surprise for scholars of comparative religion.

France has its secularism, which could be taken to imply—falsely—that the state has no role in religion. It is, for a number of reasons, difficult for the government to cooperate with religious organisations, but it has, nonetheless, helped to create representative religious bodies at different state levels.

In the Federal Republic of Germany, the states (*Länder*) are responsible for cultural and religious policies, but the federal government has created a national institution for deliberations with Muslims, the Islam Konferenz. The members have been invited by the government.

Over the past century in the Netherlands, religious organisations have been acknowledged and subsidised for their roles in care, education and media. But the secular movement has grown in size and strength, and the pressure it exerts has weakened the relationship between government and religious groups. Although mosques and their allied organisations are not included in the existing legal system, the government has been forced to deal with some problems, but only partially successfully.

Religious Obligations

Some cultural matters have been taken care of. In all three countries, the law allows local governments to subsidise organisations associated with mosques as long as the groups' aims are non-religious.[2] Many larger mosques have formed such organisations, which sponsor women's groups, courses in Arabic and education on moral and cultural matters. The last of those will nevertheless involve Islam, because questions of morality and customs are, for Muslims, issues of Islamic ethics and jurisprudence.

In general, cooperation between government and Islamic communities on the local level has been effective.[3] Some Muslim rules and customs have required adaptation of the law—especially in dealing with the ritual slaughter of animals, for which the exceptions are similar to those made for Jewish communities—and burial customs. Most Muslims take bodies home for burial, however, to avoid interring their dead in graveyards that are cleared out every 10 to 15 years.

Other needs of Islamic communities remain unresolved. The major problems are as follows:

- The building of mosques is permitted in many places but not everywhere, depending on the local authorities and local reaction. Mosque construction is often directed to areas outside city centres.
- Prayer times, the availability of prayer rooms and fasting during Ramadan require sensitive handling. As far as I have

[2] In France such organisations are named *associations culturelles*.

[3] Cf. M. Maussen, *Ruimte voor de islam?Stedelijk beleid, voorzieningen, organisaties* (Apeldoorn: Het Spinhuis, 2004), x, 27.

seen, those are not among the political issues the Islamic community has targeted for formal resolution, but they are important nonetheless.[4] It will not be easy to adapt secular business, educational and other schedules to prayer needs—that would require prayer rooms in all kinds of institutions, a bit of flexibility with lunch breaks and variable tea-breaks on the hour of regular prayer (*salat*)[5]—but freedom of religion guarantees that people can live out their faith. When Ramadan occurs during summer, with its heat and long days, it can be a problem for Muslims in Northern Europe to adhere for four weeks to restrictions on water and food intake during daylight hours. Islamic jurisprudence provides for exceptions in cases where the rules cannot be followed without difficulty or damage to health. An open discussion of religious obligations and needs could aid in producing flexible solutions.

- Religious education and the training of imams is currently a major issue, which I will deal with below.

Lack of Integration

Some see 'Islam' (which they consider a homogeneous religion) as a major obstacle to the integration of 'Muslims' (whom they regard as forming a homogeneous community). According to such a view, Islam is not able to adapt to Western values, but forms a global *ummah* (community) to which Muslims are more loyal than they are to the non-

[4] To give an example, in Amsterdam the five prayer times (*salat*), each lasting a few minutes, started at the following times on 1 October (first figure) and 15 October 2010 (second figure): 6.06/6.31, 13.31/13.27, 14.15/14.12, 16.38/16.14, 19.23/18.51 and 20.56/20.24. See http://www. guidedways.com/prayertimes/prayertimings-country-netherlands-city-Amsterdam-state-Noord-Holland-latitude-52.35-longitude-4.9167.htm, accessed 5 December 2010.

[5] Some Muslims may prefer to work with other Muslims who can help them fulfil their religious obligations. In Ankara some institutions organise meetings between prayer hours.

Islamic nations in which they live. Of course, reality is much more nuanced and diverse, but it is true that Muslims share Islamic values that differ from secular, Western values. A viable Islam policy, therefore, needs insight into the relationship between integration, value systems and Islam.

The six main problems for integration policy are:

1. immigrant difficulties with language and lack of success in education;
2. a high percentage of people without work or income, dependent on social support;
3. the need to combine contradictory values and attitudes, for instance, facilitating integration and forcing people to participate;
4. concentrations of socially and economically weak people in certain areas, both long-term inhabitants and immigrants;
5. insufficient connection with European values and insufficient participation in the local and national culture and in the public domain;
6. marginalisation and criminality.[6]

Mastering a language means understanding moral and religious terms, as well as colloquial expressions, in order to be able to communicate beyond a superficial level. When language difficulties prevent people from understanding the social values at work around them, there are significant consequences for their role in the labour market. It often means that they will also form ghetto societies where their own beliefs, values and norms dominate.

[6] Wetenschappelijk Instituut voor het CDA, *Integratie op waarde geschat* (Den Haag: Wetenschappelijk Instituut voor het CDA, 2008), 7.

Some wonder whether Islam is the very factor that hinders Muslim integration. A number of scholars and politicians believe that socio-economic conditions alone explain the lack of integration and the criminality in the Muslim community. However, careful sociological research in the Netherlands has shown that the exceptionally high percentage of Muslims among juvenile delinquents cannot be explained by socio-economic factors only and that the cultural dissonance between the home culture and Western culture plays an important role.[7] Because Muslims are part of European integration policy has to include Islam policy.

State policies do influence the success or failure of integration. Fetzer and Soper researched integration in France, Germany and Britain in light of various sociological theories. They concluded that the relationship between church and state is a better predictor of success or failure in Muslim integration than are sociological realities. An open church–state relationship is a key ingredient of successful integration.[8]

Concepts of Islam and Islamophobia

The tensions inspired by Islam cannot be resolved without accurate information about the causes of the problems and about too general ideas about 'the Islam'. Critiques of Islam raise the question whether it plays a role in the marginalised situation of so many Muslim immigrants. Although researchers and politicians think that the problems can be

[7] However, the criminality percentage of adults in this group equals that of the traditional population. R. Jennissen, *Criminaliteit, leeftijd en etniciteit: Over de afwijkende leeftijdsspecifieke criminaliteitscijfers van in Nederland verblijvende Antillianen en Marokkanen* (Amsterdam: Boom Juridische Uitgevers, 2009) , 59.

[8] J.S. Fetzer and J. Soper, *Muslims and the State in Britain, France, and Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 124, 146–9.

explained by socio-economic causes only. However, as has already been stated, it is cultural dissonance that causes deviant behaviour. Different values and practices lead to a feeling of marginalisation. Therefore, Islam is a factor in integration and youth care policies.

Accurate information on Islam is needed to correct misconceptions and prejudices. The information culture does not provide facts or insights about Islamic diversity worldwide. Populist politicians constantly talk about Islam, declaring that 'they', which is to say Muslims, do not share 'our' values, do not appreciate 'our' culture and have a religious obligation to conquer the West. The media report disasters, suicide attacks and corruption, often accompanied by bloody and emotional pictures that have a more lasting effect than any discussion programme featuring experts with a more nuanced view. Those who study Islamic radicalism say the fear of it is disproportionate to the number of people who sympathise with it. But Islamophobia is a response to more than just Islam. It is also sparked by the justified perception that the world is changing, centres of power are shifting eastward, governments can no longer guarantee social security and pensions, and climate change will have massive consequences. The world is less predictable and life is less secure than Western Europeans have been accustomed to expect. Nevertheless, for reasons of social coherence, truth and justice, policy on Islam should correct false impressions. I will deal with Islam below.

2 The Current Situation: Law, Policy and Debates

France

About five million Muslims live in France.[9] In 1905, the French Republic instituted the separation of church and state to end the influence of Catholic leadership in government. Thereafter, all power was to reside in the hands of the nation and all rules were to be derived from its authority.[10] The law on the Separation of Churches and the State, often referred to as the law on secularism (*laïcité*) was not anti-religious but anti-clerical, as has been pointed out a thousand times. The state cannot interfere in worship. Clearly religious signs, *signes ostentatoires*, are not tolerated in the public domain.[11]

To break the power of the church, the French state confiscated all its property but decided that the buildings could be used for religious purposes if the church set up *associations cultuelles* (worship associations). Consequently, church buildings are state property that can be used for religious services as long as they are used with some frequency. The state also takes care of restorations, a fact not passed over in silence when people discuss the relationship between state and mosque. Following the same secularising impulse, Christian institutions for higher education were

[9] B. Godard and S. Taussig, *Les mussulmans en France* (Paris: Hachette Littératures, 2007), 28.

[10] Cf. the Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du citoyen de 1789, Art. 3.

[11] Cf. the Law on Laicism, 1905, Art. 4; in Conseil d'État, *Rapport public 2004: Jurisprudence et avis de 2003. Un siècle de laïcité* (Paris : La documentation française, 2004), 405ff.; see also 339 and 414.

removed from the university system. In the former German areas along the Rhine, the state follows the German system, with contracts between the *départements* and the churches.

French secularism does not allow for the training of religious leaders in the academic system. The government appoints imams without formal training for the army and prisons; they follow classes on French culture at the Catholic University in Paris. The training of imams takes place in private Islamic institutions in and outside France.

In 1999, then minister of internal affairs, J.-P. Chevènement, took the initiative to establish a representative council of Islamic organisations.[12] His successor, Nicolas Sarkozy, organised elections from the bottom up in the main Islamic umbrella organisations and in 2003 was able to establish the Le Conseil Français du Culte Musulman.[13] Its composition follows the national make-up of immigrant communities. A majority of Muslims in France come from the country's former colonies, such as Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia; another large group is related to the Turkish authority for Islamic affairs, Diyanet.[14]

Some *départements* have also established Islamic councils. On the local level, the mayors and city councils in

[12] On Islamic policy cf. Godard and Taussig, *Les mussulmans*, 110–13. The book provides many statistics. For a number of the details I have used here, I am indebted to papers, so far unpublished, by Henri de la Hougue, Maître de conférences au Theologicum, Faculté de Théologie et de Sciences Religieuses de l'Institute Catholique de Paris.

[13] See http://www.portail-religion.com/FR/dossier/islam/pratique/institutions/CFCM/index.php; Godard and Taussig, *Les mussulmans*, 165–87, 349–51.

[14] Algeria, 1.5 million; Morocco, 1 million; Tunisia, 400,000; Sub-Saharan Africa, 340,000; Turkey, 310,000; converts, 4,000–100,000; in total, at least 4 million. See Godard and Taussig, *Les mussulmans*, 25–9.

cities with an Islamic population have contact with the councils and are free to cooperate with them in a number of ways.

It seems paradoxical that the government of a secular country would lead in establishing an Islamic council to help immigrants adapt to and enjoy the benefits of French laws, but the French system is not as closed as it may look. Permitting Islamic associations is criticised by those who adhere to a strict interpretation of secularism, but a moderate approach allows for state cooperation with Islamic organisations.[15]

Mosques want to be supported along the same lines as churches, a controversial position. Whether local governments have contacts and work with mosques depends largely on the attitude of the population. Discussions seem to focus on *signes ostentatoires*, the prohibition of headscarves, the building of proper mosques instead of 'garage mosques' and Islamic religious education.

The Netherlands

The Netherlands has about 900,000 inhabitants with an Islamic background.[16] The separation of church and state in 1848 allowed more freedom for other religions alongside the

[15] For the hard line, see for example H. Pena-Ruiz, Dieu et Marianne (Paris: Presses Universitaire de Paris, 2005). Nicolas Sarkozy pleads for a moderate *laïcité* in his *La République, les religions, l'espérance* (Paris: Les Éditions de Cerf, 2004). See for example his position on financing the education of religious leaders (p. 126).

[16] The largest groups of Muslims in the Netherlands, each numbering about 350,000, come from Turkey and Morocco. Other groups come from Indonesia and Surinam. Refugees have recently come from the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan, among other countries; and converts complete the population.

Reformed Church. Members of Free churches and the Catholic Church successfully fought for equal rights on subsidies for confessional schools, which was resolved by constitutional changes in 1917. The so-called Dutch pillar system was later expanded to include political groups such as socialists and humanists. Each larger group organises its own institutions for care and media. Public education and public hospitals are considered neutral. The education of religious leaders is subsidised by the state, integrated into the university system, and was recently opened to students of Islam. By law, Muslims have the right to establish their own organisations, from schools to social-work groups, homes for the elderly, broadcasters and such groups as the Society of Muslim Help Organisations. If they meet the criteria, they are subsidised by the state.[17]

The Minister of Integration, Rita Verdonk, needed an umbrella organisation with which she could work, and the Contact Organisation for Muslims and the Government (CMO) was formed and accepted in November 2004.

The government appoints qualified imams for prison and army service; the CMO is responsible for their selection and recommends them to the Minister of Justice. Since 2009, the CMO has selected teachers of Islam for public primary schools; they teach an hour a week when parents request religious education, and must be graduates of accredited institutions of higher education. In 2005 and 2006, the government subsidised the establishment of Islamic studies at two universities and a professional college for five years.

[17] There are about 40 Islamic primary schools and two secondary schools; there are also some post-secondary programs for Islamic education. A small Islamic broadcasting corporation is part of the public media.

Secularisation, mass media and globalisation have changed the Dutch picture considerably. The pillars have been weakened and opinion is hardening against a public role for organisations with a confessional background. The debate about banning religion, especially Islam, from the public domain grew sharper after 9/11, fuelled by anti-social behaviour on the part of Islamic youth:

- the murder of Theo van Gogh on 2 November 2004 by a Dutch-Moroccan after one of Van Gogh's films—made in conjunction with Ayaan Hirsi Ali, then a member of Parliament—led to severe criticism of Islam;
- petty crime—burglary, threatening ambulance personnel—committed by Islamic youth;
- discrimination and attacks based on sexual orientation or ethnic-religious identity, in the latter case, specifically Jews;
- the harsh criticism of Islam brought into the public forum by Geert Wilders's Freedom Party (on 9 June 2010, his party won 23 of the 150 seats in Parliament).[18]

In the Netherlands, Islam policy is very sensitive. A telling situation exists in Amsterdam, where the city government in 2008 was headed by a secular Jewish mayor, Job Cohen, who published a report on church and state that argued for a form of 'compensatory' separation, meaning that even-handedness would compensate for the rudimentary conditions of some groups. The policy has helped African Christians who hold church services in suburban garages, for instance, and has the potential to help Muslims set up more representative mosques.

[18] See the charge of Wilders on the basis of offence to Muslims by the state attorney: http://media.rtl.nl/media/actueel/rtlnieuws/2010/dagvaarding_Wilders.pdf, accesed 5 December 2010; with broad media coverage during the process (October 2010; the process was declared invalid and the trial will start again).

However, the majority of city council decided on a strict form of secularism. When Cohen left to become the Socialist leader in Parliament, Eberhard van der Laan, the former Socialist minister of integration, succeeded him and declared himself in favour of strict separation of church and state.[19] Disagreement over that point is currently woven into the fabric of Dutch politics. As a result, actual decisions about religion in the public sphere are taken by courts, local governments or directors of public institutions, and are not consistent.

Germany

About four million Muslims live in Germany.[20] The German constitution allows a public role for religious organisations, based on a separation of church and state but within a framework of legal relations between the two. Germany is a federal state with no tradition of centralised power. The

[19] Burgemeester en Wethouders van Amsterdam, *Notitie Scheiding van Kerk en Staat*, 27 June 2008, 8; available at http://www.amsterdam.nl/gemeente/college/oud-burgemeester_job/dossiers/scheiding_van_kerk?ActItmIdt=133851; accessed 7 December 2010. Cf. W. van de Donk and R. Plum, 'Begripsverkenning', in W. van de Donk et al. (eds.), *Geloven in het publieke domein: Verkenningen van een dubbele transformatie* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 25–54. Eberhard van der Laan distanced himself from Cohen's view in relation to state policy towards religion; see *Trouw* and AD (*Algemeen Dagblad*), 20 September 2010; available at http://www.ad.nl/ad/nl/1041/Amsterdam/article/detail/513569/2010/09/20/Van-der-Laan-neemt-afstand-van-Cohen-over-religie.dhtml, accessed 7 December 2010.

[20] Of this number about 2.5 million come from Turkey, and of these a small majority belong to Diyanet and a large minority to Milli Görüs; there are also Suleymanis and Alevites. Still others come from North Africa, and there are refugees from many countries. A third of the Muslims in Germany live in North Rhine-Westphalia; other concentrations are in Baden-Würtenberg, Bavaria and Hesse. See P. Hunseler, 'Deutschlands Muslime,' in *Herder Korrespondenz—Special, Die unbekannte Religion: Muslime in Deutschland* (2009, no. 2), 2–6. Cf. S. Haug, S. Müssig and A. Stichs, *Muslimisches Leben in Deutschland* (web publication, Deutsche Islam Konferenz, Forschungsbericht 6, 2009), 57–108; available at http://www.deutsche-islam-konferenz.de/cln_117/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/DIK/Downloads/WissenschaftPublikationen/MLD-Vollversion,templateId=raw,property=publicationFile.pdf/MLD-Vollversion.pdfchen, accessed 7 December 2010.

central government and the states, or *Länder*, share power. In the Federal Republic of Germany, the *Länder* are responsible for culture and religion, *Landeshoheit*; therefore each German state must make its own arrangements.

The preamble of the constitution states the responsibility of the German people before God and mankind to serve peace. Article 3 grants equality before the law and article 4 specifies freedom of religion and expression. Article 5 confirms freedom of expression within the limits set by other laws. Article 7 states that education is a state responsibility, that religious education is a normal part of the curriculum except in non-confessional schools, that the responsibility of religious education is shared with religious communities and that teachers and parents need not take part in religious education.

That explains why the German discussion on Islam focuses on religious education, which requires that teachers be properly trained. Several universities in *Länder* with substantial Muslim populations have prepared or are preparing educational programmes for religious teachers. The university of Osnabrück also has a programme for the education of imams, and the universities of Münster and Tübingen are preparing such programmes.[21] Several *Länder* have ruled that schoolteachers, and in two *Länder* all public servants, must not display religious symbols. The wearing of headscarves and gender equality have, therefore, become

[21] Personal communications from colleagues that are directly involved; cf. http://www.deutsche-islam-konferenz.de/nn_1864608/SubSites/DIK/DE/ImameTheologie/Hochschulausbildung/hochschulausbildung-node.html?__nnn=true, accessed 11 December 2010. For descriptions of initiatives in Germany, see W. Weisse (ed.), *Theologie im Plural: Eine akademische Herausforderung* (Münster: Waxman, 2009), 85–153.

serious issues. Muslims wearing headscarves complain that it is difficult to get a job in public schools, or in the public service at all in Berlin and Hessen.[22]

Being responsible for cultural and religious policy, the *Länder* have contracts with the churches as *Körperschaften des öffentlichen Rechts* (public law corporations) that regulate the work of churches in and with institutions providing education and care. A special German arrangement, often misunderstood, is the church tax (*Kirchensteuer*) which does not entail that the state pays the church, but that the state just collects the contributions from church members on behalf of the churches.

The term *Staatskirchenrecht* refers to laws governing cooperation between states and their churches. In principle, the system could also work for Islam, but so far it has not. The main problems are the lack of an analogous 'church' law in most mosques, different hierarchies and administrative structures and, at times, no obvious representative body or person with which to work.

The previous federal government felt the need to develop Islam policy on a national level. The former Minister of the Interior, Wolfgang Schäuble, convened an Islam Konferenz that has met annually since 2006.[23] The project has been very successful in attracting attention to Islamic issues in

[22] See http://www.deutsche-islam-konferenz.de/cln_117/nn_1875028/SubSites/DIK/DE/KopftuchGender/Urteile/urteile-node.html?__nnn=true, accessed 10 December 2010.

[23] A good source on this topic is Deutsche Islam Konferenz (DIK), *Drei Jahre Deutsche Islam Konferenz (DIK) 2006–2009: Muslime in Deutschland – deutsche Muslime* (web publication); available at http://www.deutsche-islam-konferenz.de. See also *Herder Korrespondenz. Die unbekannte Religion: Muslime in Deutschland* (2009, Special no. 2).

Germany, taking Muslims seriously as German citizens and publishing useful information on Islamic life in Germany. Committees work on reports dealing with urgent social, cultural and religious questions. In its second phase, which started in 2009, the Islam Konferenz will work towards the further integration of Muslims in Germany; adapt the *Staatskirchenrecht* to a pluralist reality, *Staatsreligionsrecht*; help organise all branches of Islamic education; work for gender equality and provide a forum for discussion of the Islam policies of the *Länder*.[24]

The Islam Konferenz is not without controversy, however, and a number of specific matters have been raised:

• The German *Länder* are responsible for cultural and religious policy, but the Islam Konferenz takes up matters that are better dealt with at a national level, indicating a need for a national Islam policy.

• In 2006 the government invited 15 Muslims—five representatives of mosque organisations and 10 unaligned Muslims—and 14 representatives from regional and municipal governments. The choice of the 10 individual Muslims was motivated by the fact that only a third of German Muslims feel themselves to be represented by umbrella organisations. But Islamic umbrella organisations have objected to the composition of the Islam Konferenz

[24] See Deutsche Islam Konferenz (DIK), *Schlussfolgerungen des Plenums vom 17. Mai 2010: Künftiges Arbeitsprogramm* (web publication of the Bundesministerium des Inneren und Deutsche Islam Konferenz); available at http://www.deutsche-islam-konferenz.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/DIK/Downloads/DokumenteDIK/Plenum-arbeitsprogramm,templateId=raw,property=publicationFile.pdf/Plenum-arbeitsprogramm.pdf, accessed 11 December 2010.

and threatened to withhold participation. The government also invited an organisation of secular Turks. [25]

• The state intervenes in religious affairs and even arranges the representation of the Islamic community, including 'non-believing Muslims'—a controversial point, given 'the separation between church and state.'

• An organisation under the name Critical Islam Conference[26] has expressed the belief that Islam is intolerant and violent, and does not respect individual freedom. In the late summer of 2010, an intense debate began in Germany about the integration of Muslims. The Social Democratic politician Thilo Sarrazin suggested in a national bestseller that Muslim immigrants are the key factor in Germany's decline. While the political establishment and public media largely rejected that thesis, a sizeable portion of public opinion is on his side. Some Conservative politicians then began to voice doubts about Muslim integration. Both Chancellor Merkel and President Wulff have declared that 'Islam belongs to Germany', but they admit that problems exist and call on Muslims to increase their efforts at integration.[27]

Although the composition of the Islam Konferenz is debatable, the organisation has produced reliable information

[25] Haug, Müssig and Stichs, *Muslimisches Leben*, 173–81, esp. 175. For the composition of the DIK in 2010, see http://www.deutsche-islam-konferenz.de/cln_117/nn_1318820/SubSites/DIK/DE/DieDIK/NeueTeilnehmer/neue-teilnehmer-inhalt.html; for some critical comments, see for example http://de.qantara.de/webcom/show_article.php/_c-469/_nr-1178/i.html, both sites accessed 11 December 2010.

[26] Supported by organisations such as the Council of Ex-Muslims, the Giordano Bruno Foundation for Evolutionary Humanism and the editors of *Hintergrund*, a journal for critical theory and politics.

[27] See Thilo Sarrazin, *Deutschland schafft sich ab* (Munich: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 2010). The remarks of Chancellor Merkel and president Wulff got wide media coverage; see for example http://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article10111639/Kanzlerin-Merkel-relativiert-Wulffs-Islam-Plaedoyer.html, accessed 11 December 2010.

about Muslims in Germany and serious information and proposals for dealing with problems such as religious education.[28]

Comparisons

Incentives to formulate policy for dealing with Islamic issues vary. In France, the visible Islamic presence emphasises the need for special provisions within the secular culture. In the Netherlands, a clear need exists for imams in prisons, the armed forces and hospitals, and training imams who serve in mosques is a significant issue. Germany needs to create opportunities for Muslim children to receive religious education.

All three countries must decide how to cooperate with Islam and especially with mosques and their organisations. Islam has neither a hierarchical structure nor a system of legal representation. Within itself, it is diverse; some subgroups maintain close ties to the nation from which they came. That is why the three governments have helped to establish representative, but weak, Islamic bodies to discuss issues of common concern, issues that are more or less the same in all three countries.

Their different historical backgrounds and constitutions oblige the three countries to approach Islam in different ways. In France, the state must take a hands-off approach

[28] Cf., for example, a valuable survey sent by a sub-committee to the third plenum (2008) of the Deutsche Islam Konferenz, written by Heinrich de Wall, 'Verfassungsrechtliche Rahmenbedingungen eines islamischen Religionsunterrichts'(web publication); available at http://www.deutsche-islam-konferenz.de/cln_117/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/DIK/Downloads/Sonstiges/2008-IRU-zwischenresumee-der-dik,templateId=raw,property=publicationFile.pdf/2008-IRU-zwischenresumee-der-dik.pdf, d.d. 20 February 2008, accessed 11 December 2010.

to religion, at least in principle. Nonetheless, it is involved in religious issues, and in the case of Islam the state has taken a number of initiatives. The state has no role to play, however, in training imams at institutions of higher education. In the Netherlands, different interpretations of the separation of church and state mean that city councils, courts and public institutions come to contradictory decisions about support for religious organisations. The German states are responsible for policies relating to Islam, but the federal government must see that those policies do not contradict each other, and so coordinates and mediates between the states.

3 Central Issues in Policymaking

Now that the general situation has been laid out, I will turn to a discussion of some of the central issues in designing policy.

Separation of and Relationships Between the State and Religious Organisations

In Germany, Islam policy is not a constitutional but a legal matter, involving *Staatskirchenrecht* and *Landeshoheit*. In France, it is both constitutional and cultural, and in the Netherlands, the problem is cultural, but also and increasingly constitutional. Nonetheless, in all three countries, many or even most Islamic groups have established social and cultural organisations that receive state funding.

I will discuss two points related to that: the reason the state needs and cannot neglect religion; and the need for separation between state and church not to be a separation between state and religion.

The quality of society depends on people's morality, ideals, interest in the common good and contributions to the community. Freedom of conscience and religion means the state has no say in people's values and norms—this is the domain of world view traditions whether they operate through the media, schools or mosques, through formal or informal authorities. Thus society needs traditions as a framework within which ideas about individual and common good can be transmitted and discussed. When some

traditions are at odds with a society's standards, conflict results.

The separation of church and state should not be interpreted as the separation of religion and the state; governments must have some relationship with religious groups. The important point is the separation of power and authority between the two.

Representation and International Relations

In order to cooperate with religious organisations, the state needs representative counterparts. Even France has organised a representative council for Muslims. All three states have provided options for *halal* slaughter, religious burial and other issues that Muslims have in common. Cooperation with mosques, their organisations, and the education of imams are more difficult matters: they are closer to the heart of Islam, and mosques are organised along national and ethnic lines and are not uniform in their approach. Because umbrella organisations of mosques are central to the networks of many other Islamic organisations, integration policy needs cooperation with mosque organisations as well.[29] The following four concerns relate to representation:

1. *The national background of umbrella organisations of mosques*. European governments work with these organisations, which were created by earlier generations of

[29] See A. van Heelsum, M. Fennema and J. Tillie, 'Moslim in Nederland: Islamitische organisaties in Nederland' (Den Haag: Instituut voor Migratie-en Etnische Studies, July 2004), SCP-werkdocument 106e, 21.

migrants and especially the guest workers of the 1960s. In some countries, many Muslims have dual nationality and, in the way of migrants all over the world, close ties to their homeland. Some umbrella organisations work in harmony with governments in their homelands, others are independent.

Islamic homeland governments maintain their interest in citizens abroad for various legal, cultural and religious reasons. They feel some responsibility for the welfare of their people, and help them, for instance, with arrangements to bury their dead at home. The welfare of citizens abroad can also have positive economic effects in the home country. Governments also keep an eye on radicalisation; individuals who for good reason were not appointed imams at home can assume that mantle in Europe, and Islamic developments abroad can influence mosques at home. Therefore, governments of the homelands have an interest in the development of Islam in Europe. Finally, governments in Islamic countries may also have reservations about the strong forms of secularisation abroad.

In order to clarify the problem for European Islam policy, I will use the concepts of ethnicisation and parallel societies. In many places in the world, migrants find a new home in religious organisations that offer a kind of extended family with care, education and help in finding employment and housing. I call that the ethnicisation of religion. It helps people to find their way in unfamiliar terrain, but it can also develop into a sort of parallel society that hinders integration. Because mosques and their organisations are at the heart of Islamic immigrant communities, this ethnicisation attracts the attention of both the migrants' home governments and those of the European countries in

which they are settling. France, for instance, has had to accept ties between the Algerian government and the Grande Mosquée in Paris. Morocco recently established an advisory body, Le Conseil de la Communauté Marocaine à l'Étranger (The Council of the Moroccan Community in Foreign Countries) that advises the Moroccan government on its policy of support for the Moroccan community, and also helps organise Moroccan mosques.

The Turkish agency for Islamic affairs, Diyanet, supervises imams in the three countries in question. Diyanet is well organised: it employs 70,000 imams and sends imams to Europe for periods of four years. It also provides the Friday sermon for imams.[30] Diyanet has recently started a theological programme in Ankara and Istanbul for European Turkish young people to train as theologians and imams. In Europe, mosques of a type forbidden in Turkey have been established. In Germany about 600 mosques of Milli Görüs exist, compared with 800 under Diyanet, and important Alevite groups exist in Germany as well.

2. *Mosques have no church law.* The structure of Islamic judicial and ethical authority differs from that of Christian churches. The Sunni tradition has no overseers, bishops or ayatollahs, and in Islamic countries, religion is often intertwined with government. In those nations, everyone acknowledges that Muslim scholars have the authority to issue fatwas on ethical and legal issues; their judgments count as valid instructions to Muslims.

In Islamic states, the department of religious affairs appoints imams. With the exception of Turkish

[30] The Diyanet website is available at http://www.diyanet.gov.tr/English/tanitim.asp?id=4, accessed 11 December 2010.

organisations, Western mosques have nothing comparable to the church laws of the West. In Islamic communities, authority is embodied in capable and trusted individuals. Many Islamic denominations in Western Europe have loose structures and influential key people. It is not easy, therefore, to establish an umbrella organisation of mosques obedient to a leadership. As a result, the problem of representation can be solved for the time being only by working together with umbrella organisations and key individuals not necessarily delegated by the mosques.

3. *Tensions between older, traditional Muslims and their younger, acculturated counterparts*. Rapid developments in European Islamic communities, especially among young people, cause tension between mosque organisations and their members. Research shows that only a third of German Muslims feel represented by the mosque organisations that participate in the Islam Konferenz. The membership of Diyanet is more loyal than other memberships, and Turkish Islam a bit more ethnically based than other denominations are. Young people tend to find their authorities on the Internet and discuss their problems on discussion sites. The question is how representative the representatives are.

4. *Many Muslims do not belong to the umbrella groups*. Because umbrella organisations of mosques are based on national and denominational differences, they exclude Muslims from other ethnicities or countries. In the Netherlands, most Muslim refugees, immigrants, converts and temporary workers will visit Moroccan mosques that use Arabic and that increasingly provide summaries of the sermons in Dutch. That weakens the representation and lessens the accuracy of the information that umbrella groups can provide.

In summary, the issue of representation is a difficult one. An Islam policy that builds on the ethnic structures of an umbrella organisations of mosques may fulfil the rules, but is deficient in two respects: many Muslims are not represented; and such a policy does not help to develop European Islamic communities. That conclusion is not meant to imply a critique of the ties between ethnic-national immigrant mosques and their homeland.

Integration, Social Cohesion, *Leitkultur* and National Identity

Why do the three EU countries in question not simply respect religious freedom, circumvent religious traditions and deal with Islam? Whatever their constitutional differences, all three have the same reasons for becoming involved: to adapt laws, creating options that allow Muslims to follow the rules of Islamic life; to stimulate knowledge of Islam and prevent the marginalisation and radicalisation of Muslims; and to help Muslims take part in society and to support social cohesion.

Integration can be defined as equality under the law, equal participation in social and economic life, command of the language and respect for the host country's values, norms and conduct.[31] Integration cannot be forced, but requires education and acculturation, so governments depend on the country's cultural and education systems:

[31] Temporary Committee for the Evaluation of Integration Policy, *Bruggen bouwen: Eindrapport,* Tweede Kamer 2003–4 (The Hague: Sdu Uitgevers, 2004), 105. Cf. H. Woldring, *Pluralism, integratie en cohesie* (Budel, the Netherlands: Damon, 2006), 75. The Dutch Social and Cultural Planning Office states that although the focus was for a long time on socio-economic development, it is now concentrating more on the socio-cultural aspects of integration. See Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, *In het zicht van de toekomst: Sociaal en Cultural Rapport 2004* (The Hague, 2004).

inspiring teachers, favourably disposed parents and friends, and on community interaction in which people pass on values, norms and ways to cope with the rules.

Social cohesion rests on shared values and the confidence that people will not let others down but will help them out if necessary. Society can live with differences in philosophies of life—either religious or secular—but it needs shared values as a kind of middle ground between individuals and the state. Values are by definition part of a world view. In the political sphere, values are applied but not invented, and the state is dependent on secular and/or religious traditions for the internalisation and deepening of values and norms.[32]

With respect to integration and cohesion policies, Islam policy has at least three aims on both the national and the local levels: to encourage people to follow the law; to encourage the transmission of social values by way of education, the media and community groups; to transmit and develop traditions and world views and to foster interreligious dialogue.

The success of political solutions to the current problems being encountered in Europe, then, depends on:

- disseminating fair and balanced information about all religious and cultural traditions, including Islam;
- facilitating the education of secular and religious leaders, including imams, representing a range of world views;

[32] Cf. Woldring, *Pluralism*, 106. The best-known statement of this was made in 1967 by Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde, a judge in the German Constitutional Court: the free and secular state depends on values that it cannot itself guarantee; see his 'Die Entstehung des Staates als Vorgang der Säkularisation', in *Staat, Gesellschaft, Freiheit: Studien zur Staatstheorie und zum Verfassungsrecht* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1967): 60.

• maintaining dialogue with religious leaders on moral dilemmas and their realities;
• cooperating with mosques in preventing youth from breaking the law, and recognising that Islam helps Muslims order their lives;
• facilitating the education of imams so they can develop their heritage in context and guide people in dealing with new questions and reorienting themselves.[33]

The main philosophical point to be made is that the work of government is important but covers only part of life; it excludes existential questions. The state constitution dictates fundamental values for society, but it will nonetheless encounter diverse traditions with their own values, ones that do not always conform to the fundamental values of the state. The influx of Islamic migrants to Central and Western Europe raises the question of whether they will absorb the legal and social values of their host countries.

It is a question that brings us to an ambiguity that exists between constitutions as a whole and freedom of religion: whether the existing value system serves what has been called the *Leitkultur* in the German discussion and *l'identité nationale* in France? Discussions on *Leitkultur* and *identité française* have been quite controversial. The central objections, discussed by many people on websites, have been the classical ethical questions: Whose

[33] Informants said that imams in the poor *banlieus* in France do not feel responsibility for the riots of young people of North African descent—as those that occurred in Paris in 2005. A mosque in De Baarsjes, a part of Amsterdam, refused to cooperate with the local government to prevent criminality of young people because Muslims visit the mosque to pray and the mosque had no influence upon what people do outside the mosque; see Forum and the Verwey-Jonker Instituut, 'Toekomstverkenning De Baarsjes: Verslag van documentenanalyse en interviewronde over "Het Contract met de samenleving"' (Amsterdam: 2008), 6. Other Muslim leaders (and scholars) think that Islam should be part of the guidance of young people—*pace* laicising tendencies.

justice? Whose laws? Nevertheless, ideas such as *Leitkultur* and national identity lurk behind all integration policy and they materialise in concrete practices.[34]

Because cultures differ and cultural and religious insights and values are part of life, the arrival of large numbers of immigrants—especially in locations with a high level of immigration—challenges existing customs and traditions that may have grown up over centuries. The awkward term *Leitkultur* refers to values and ways of social, economic and political life that support respect for individual freedoms and responsibilities, and presupposes a social cohesion and social support for those who need help. The terms *Leitkultur* and national identity do not refer to stable entities, and neither does Islam. Traditions are dynamic. A peaceful future depends on preserving what is valuable and changing what we can to accommodate others, including Muslims; accepting that values differ according to different world view traditions and that we must be open about those differences to increase social cohesion and avoid conflict; and educating people in the value system of a humane democratic society in which differences of opinion are tolerated and discussed.

Islam and Western Values

A central question is whether Muslims can adapt to Western culture and take part in democracy. The diversity of Islam

[34] Hartmut Esser discusses the idea in his 'Wertekonsens und die Integration offener Gesellschaften', in *Drei Jahre Islam Konferenz* (web publication, 2009), 82–105; available at http://DIK—DIK/dik-broschuere-download,templateId=raw,property=publicationFile.pdf/dik-broschuere-download.pdf, accessed 11 December 2010. He rejects *Leitkultur* as a way of life but accepts, of course, that newcomers have to appropriate the more general fundamental values of society. The French website was open from November 2009 till early February 2010 and has raised a lot of debate; the question as to national identity itself raised severe criticisms.

implies that general statements about it are most often mistaken. The pictures people have of Islam are saturated with bloody attacks and reports of the oppression and stoning of women, many of which come from remote and undeveloped areas and cannot be applied to all Muslims. Texts of the Koran often are quoted in isolation from their broader context and the interpretative tradition of Islam. The Christian tradition can be equally misjudged when people look at it in light of the conflicts in Northern Ireland, Serbian killings of Muslims, the crusades, the abuse of children by clergy and so forth. Populist political parties use Islam as a scapegoat for the problems of the globalising world. But what is the real Islam?

The question is similar to debates about the real nature of socialism, humanism, Hinduism, paganism and Christianity. Meaningful discussion has to stick to three rules: never approach another tradition in ways that you would not accept for your own; distinguish between the central beliefs and practices of Islam and what people make out of it; and concentrate on Islam as it is lived in the EU, while taking note of what is going on in North Africa and Turkey.

Islam has many forms. Indian Islam has adapted to Indian culture and Indonesian to Indonesian culture. There is no reason why Muslims cannot develop an Islam in the West. Much depends on the latitude and facilities granted to them by other EU residents.

Islamic developments in Morocco, Egypt and Turkey are not as well known as the seeming brutality of Islam in more remote areas. However, in Rabat, Cairo and Ankara, the leadership lives in a globalising world, just as its colleagues in Brussels and Washington do. The Egyptian minister of

religious affairs argues for a modernised Islam, freedom of religion, cooperation between Muslims and Christians. Diyanet stimulates a democratic Islam. All of them reject an Islamic radicalism that makes for more victims in Islamic countries than in the West.

At the moment, there is scant hope for democracy in North Africa. However, democracy has cultural preconditions that are not inborn but must be appropriated by large parts of the population: equality, an educated reading of religious and political traditions, respect for a variety of opinions and so on. No government can instil those insights by decree, neither in Casablanca nor Cairo, nor in Marseille, Rotterdam or the Ruhrgebiet.

Globalisation has another side to it: the internalisation of Islamic movements and a growing Islamic self-confidence. Mecca is the religious and ritual heart of Islam and Cairo its intellectual and political centre. International institutions and relations between Islamic groups are developing within globalisation, fuelled by the migration of economic and political power from traditional Western centres eastwards. In many African and Asian countries, strict secularisation is considered inhumane. Europe cannot neglect its Islam, neither can international politics.

In principle, Islam, with its belief in equality and accountability before God, is compatible with democracy. It leaves responsibility for a good and appropriate way of life to each individual person.[35] Islam also has a long tradition of

[35] At the 2010 edition of the annual international Islam Conference, held in Cairo, some 10 speakers, including respected scholars, from various Islamic countries stressed freedom of religion.

separation—to varying degrees—between Islamic and state leadership and is compatible with full-blown separation of church and state as long as civic society is flourishing and radicalisation has little hope of taking hold.[36]

The political task is to facilitate the free development of Islamic theology in Europe and the education of imams and muftis, the jurists who interpret religious law. It is irresponsible to leave Islamic thought in Europe to institutions organised from outside Europe, with a majority of imams who do not speak the language, do not read the papers and are able neither to discuss the relationship between the Enlightenment and religion nor lead their young people to live in a secular and pluralistic society. In that situation, young people are driven to consult websites on 'the real Islam'.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

In this section, I make recommendations for an Islam policy. I will follow the challenges described in Part 1, summarise the problems and formulate advice on the basis of what has been seen in Parts 2 and 3.

[36] The lack of democracy in some Islamic states generates opposition that easily leads to radicalisation.

The Mismatch Between the Law and the Mosques

The three main problems are:

1. Umbrella organisations of mosques do not fit into the legal systems of France, Germany and the Netherlands. Many mosques, organised along ethnic and national lines, do not fulfil the legal requirements for representation.
2. Governments cooperate with Islamic organisations, but it is done more or less invisibly in France and has become controversial in the Netherlands. Islam, nonetheless, is a necessary part the developing value system of Muslim youth.
3. The Islamic spiritual leadership is, generally speaking, not acculturated and unable to develop the authentic European Islam demanded by many Muslims. Initiatives for Islamic theological studies along inter-Islamic divisions lines, have been developed in the Netherlands and Germany but they are not yet rigorous enough. France has no initiatives in this area and leaves imam training to study centres outside its educational institutions.

Recommendations:

- The problems are best solved in an open way. We should find ways to cope with the fact that mosques and their organisations do not fit the legal system and that many Muslims are not represented by the organisations.[37] Laws may have to be changed or amended.
- For now, governments should work with representatives of Islamic groups and with key individuals who are knowledgeable and trusted by Islamic communities.

[37] Cf. Wissenschaftsrat, *Empfehlungen zur Weiterentwicklung von Theologien und religionsbezogenen Wissenschaften an deutschen Hochschulen* (Berlin: 29 January 2010), 80–4

• A *laïcité positive* should create more generous opportunities for cooperation between governments and mosques, and acknowledge the importance of religion in education and in the provision of various types of care for those in need. Potential areas of government–mosque cooperation are in education; spiritual care in hospitals, the armed forces, prisons and the like; and in various organisations that provide social and religious support.

• The education of imams and the theological development of an authentic, contextual Islam should be part of the academic system in accordance with academic standards, freedom of religion and the right to free speech.

Religious Obligations

Some accommodation of religious obligations, such as prayer times and burial rites, has been arranged, but it is not enough. It would help Muslims to have prayer rooms available for regular prayers (*salat*). That would stimulate integration because observant Muslims would then be attracted to non-Muslim firms and offices.

Provision should be made for the important festivities of Islam. Friday prayers are no different than Friday evening and Saturday for Jews and Sunday morning for Christians. The end of Ramadan and the Festival of Sacrifice can be compared with Christmas and Easter. During Ramadan, Muslims are obliged to fast, with some exceptions, and religious and family life are central. Those are facts to which we can no longer turn a blind eye. In schools and other educational institutions with many Muslim students it is advisable not to organise meetings, classes, lectures and exams during the Friday midday *salat* or during the three days after Ramadan or during the Sacrifice Festivities.

Recommendations:

• In institutions of care, the armed forces and prisons, rooms for prayer and Friday preaching are essential; in public institutions such as city halls, schools and universities, prayer rooms are advisable.

• With members of Islamic communities, and particularly *fiqh* scholars, negotiations over prayer times will allow Muslims to live according to at least elementary religious rules. That would mean not organising meetings, classes, lectures and exams during the Friday midday *salat*, during the three days after Ramadan or during the Festival of Sacrifice.

• Employers should openly discuss with Muslim employees how religious duties can best be combined with the obligations of the job.

A Lack of Integration Among a High Percentage of Muslims

Social cohesion requires a certain consensus among the population about values and norms. Values by definition are part of philosophies of life, either secular or religious: world view communities hand over insights into values and norms, and their applications in concrete situations. Therefore, the search for common values and consent about their interpretation requires interreligious and intercultural dialogue between civilians.[38] Social cohesion and dialogue presuppose understanding between people from various traditions, and that requires a good basic knowledge of traditions and their variants. Education and information should provide insight into Islamic traditions in the EU as well as the values of social

[38] For this reason, the Council of Europe pleas for intercultural (and interreligious) dialogue: 'Living together as equals in dignity', White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 7 May 2008), 22–4.

cohesion and the constitution. Because all citizens participate in the system, they ultimately need to feel responsible for society and for contributing to it. Constitutional order and the central values of our societies must be safeguarded.

Recommendations:

- On all levels, governments must facilitate dialogue between religious organisations. That is most important on the local level, where practical integration takes place.
- Governments also need to create spaces for encounters—for example exhibitions, youth exchanges, intercultural festivals and cooperation in education.

Concepts of Islam and Islamophobia

Accurate information about Islam is urgently needed. Populist politicians propagate ideas that do an injustice to the real Islamic population, and that in turn prevents Muslims from feeling at home and inhibits integration. In parts of Europe's Islamic population, the lack of integration and sense of social responsibility creates real problems.

Recommendations:

- Accurate information must be provided, and information about Islam and other traditions become part of primary and secondary education.
- Inaccurate stereotypes about Europe's Islamic population in news and documentaries must be corrected; this is the media's responsibility.

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